



## smuggling of migrants — global news august 2016

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This monthly newsletter summarises news items and media commentary from some of the world's leading media outlets. The Migrant Smuggling Working Group takes no responsibility for the content and accuracy of the information provided in these news items.

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### AFRICA

#### LIBYA

***IOM: Only 4 survivors from migrant shipwreck off Libya – 15 January 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--italy-migrants-20170114-story.html>

A migrant ship carrying around 100 people capsized in the frigid waters off Libya on Saturday and only four survivors had been rescued after hours of searching, aid groups said.

#### NIGER

***Niger's migrant smuggling hub empties after EU crackdown – 31 January 2017***

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-niger-migration-agadez-idUSKBN15F13Q>

Less than a year ago, Agadez was a boomtown - a hub for smuggling networks that profited off migrants seeking a better life and opportunities in Europe. But that was before the European Union, working with Niger's government, bankrolled a crackdown on the trade.

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### AMERICAS

#### CANADA

***Sun Sea voyage was a humanitarian service to Tamil migrants: defence – 12 January 2017***

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/sun-sea-voyage-was-a-humanitarian-service-to-tamil-migrants-defence/article33613943/>

Defence lawyers made their final pitch to the jury at a human-smuggling trial Thursday, arguing their clients provided humanitarian assistance to Sri Lankan Tamils fleeing persecution in a country ravaged by civil war, challenging the Crown's view that the accused illegally organized the MV Sun Sea's arrival in Canada.

***Man accused in human-smuggling trial was owner of Tamil ship: Crown – 13 January 2017***

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/man-accused-in-human-smuggling-trial-was-owner-of-tamil-ship-crown/article33625603/>

The Crown began its closing submission at the MV Sun Sea human-smuggling trial Friday, alleging one of the accused not only arranged supplies, accommodation and transport for Sri Lankan Tamil migrants, but was also the owner of the ship.

***Judge tells jury to be cautious about eyewitness evidence in Sun Sea case – 17 January 2017***

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/judge-tells-jury-to-be-cautious-about-eyewitness-evidence-in-sun-sea-case/article33653335/>

A British Columbia Supreme Court justice has instructed a jury to be “very cautious” about relying on eyewitness evidence to find guilt in the case of four men accused of smuggling hundreds of Tamil migrants to Canada.

***Jury starts deliberations for accused human smugglers linked to Sun Sea – 19 January 2017***

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/jury-starts-deliberations-for-accused-human-smugglers-linked-to-sun-sea/article33679083/>

The fate of four men accused of using a derelict cargo ship to smuggle hundreds of Tamil asylum seekers into Canada was placed in the hands of a jury on Thursday.

***Three men not guilty in B.C. human smuggling case; mistrial declared for fourth – 25 January 2017***

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/three-men-not-guilty-in-bc-human-smuggling-case-mistrial-declared-for-fourth/article33769865/>

The jury at a human-smuggling trial involving the arrival of nearly 500 Tamil migrants in British Columbia has found three of the men accused of orchestrating the voyage not guilty, but failed to reach a verdict for a man the Crown alleged owned the ship.

***In wake of Sun Sea acquittals, calls to end refugee detentions – 26 January 2017***

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/in-wake-of-sun-sea-acquittals-calls-to-end-refugee-detentions/article33789890/>

Refugee advocates say it’s time to scrap measures that were introduced in the wake of the arrival of hundreds of Tamil migrants on the MV Sun Sea, after the jury at a high-profile human smuggling trial failed earlier this week to convict any of the four men accused of organizing the voyage.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

***Mexican woman pleads guilty to bribing US border inspector – 6 January 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-us--border-corruption-20170106-story.html>

A Mexican woman has pleaded guilty to bribing a U.S. border inspector in San Diego with cash and sexual favors for allowing people to enter the country illegally.

***Trump's pick for Homeland Security chief says border wall 'will not do the job' – 10 January 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-kelly-nomination-20170110-story.html>

For more than a year, Donald Trump has rallied supporters by vowing to build a “big beautiful” wall along the nearly 2,000-mile-long border with Mexico, calling it crucial to stop migrants, drugs and criminals from entering the United States.

***Ex-U.S. customs officer admits taking cash, sexual bribes to allow human smuggling – 10 January 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-border-bribes-20170110-story.html>

A former U.S. Customs and Border Protection officer pleaded guilty Tuesday to accepting bribes of cash and sexual favors in exchange for waving through carloads of immigrants crossing illegally at the San Ysidro Port of Entry.

### ***Obama ending 'wet-foot, dry-foot' Cuban immigration policy – 12 January 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-tns-bc-uscuba-1st-lede-20170112-story.html>

MIAMI The Obama administration on Thursday pulled the plug on a controversial policy for Cuban migrants essentially turning the clock back on decades of preferential treatment for Cubans and making those who arrive without visas subject to deportation.

### ***'Obama has killed our dream': Cuban immigrants marooned in Mexico and Central America after Obama ends their special status – 13 January 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-cuba-migrants-20170113-story.html>

Alexander Gutierrez Garcia left Cuba last August, beginning a treacherous journey up the spine of South and Central America in a quest to reach the United States.

### ***Deciphering the new US policies that affect Cuban migrants – 13 January 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-tns-bc-uscuba-policy-20170113-story.html>

MIAMI From the streets of Havana to the Mexican border with the United States to South Florida, there was a new immigration reality Friday, the day after the Obama administration said Cubans would no longer be allowed to enter the United States without visas.

### ***Claims of Corrupt Immigration Contractors Go Unexamined, Investigators Say – 23 January 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/23/us/politics/immigration-contractors-corruption-dhs.html>

Dozens of cases of possible wrongdoing by contract workers at the Department of Homeland Security agency responsible for citizenship, visas and green cards have sat idle for two years because internal investigators say they have been denied the authority to look into the allegations, interviews and documents show.

### ***A look at border security, fencing as Trump announces wall – 25 January 2017***

<http://www.businessinsider.com/ap-a-look-at-border-security-fencing-as-trump-announces-wall-2017-1/?r=AU&IR=T>

President Donald Trump announced his long-awaited plan Wednesday to build a wall on the 1,954-mile U.S. border with Mexico, calling for its "immediate construction" to stop the flow of smuggling and drugs.

### ***A look at border security, fencing as Trump announces wall – 26 January 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-us--trump-immigration-state-of-border-20170125-story.html>

President Donald Trump announced his long-awaited plan Wednesday to build a wall on the 1,954-mile U.S. border with Mexico, calling for its "immediate construction" to stop illegal immigration, drug and human trafficking and acts of terrorism.

### ***The wall, deportations, sanctuary cities: What Trump's orders mean, and what they don't – 26 January 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/ct-trump-immigration-break-down-20170126-story.html>

During his presidential campaign, no single promise electrified Donald Trump's supporters more than the pledge to build a "big, beautiful wall" all along the border with Mexico.

### ***Trump's wall met with skepticism, unease on US-Mexico border – 26 January 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-us--trump-immigration-on-the-border-20170126-story.html>

As President Donald Trump announced his plans for a wall on the U.S. border with Mexico, Border Patrol agents in San Diego on the lookout for drugs and smugglers drove all-terrain vehicles along a barrier that reaches 18 feet, topped by razor wire and reinforced by cameras and lighting.

***Trump voters thrilled with promised action on border wall – 27 January 2017***

<http://www.denverpost.com/2017/01/27/mexico-us-border-wall-trump-voters-thrilled/>

President Donald Trump's announcement that he is taking steps toward building a U.S.-Mexico border wall was welcome news for voters who say they're glad he is following through on one of his biggest campaign promises.

***'Dreams Die' for Refugees on Verge of Coming to U.S. as Trump Closes Door – 28 January 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/28/world/middleeast/trump-middle-east-refugees-ban.html>

Sardar Hussain refused to believe it. He had been orphaned in Afghanistan by a Taliban bomb at age 13. After waiting in limbo for two years, he said he was only days away from getting on a plane to the United States when he heard that President Trump would be barring entry to refugees.

***Jury selection begins in Cuban ballplayer smuggling case – 30 January 2017***

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/jury-selection-begins-in-cuban-ballplayer-smuggling-case/2017/01/30/0c91f84a-e6e1-11e6-903d-9b11ed7d8d2a\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/jury-selection-begins-in-cuban-ballplayer-smuggling-case/2017/01/30/0c91f84a-e6e1-11e6-903d-9b11ed7d8d2a_story.html)

Jury selection is beginning in Miami federal court for a sports agent and an associate charged with illegally smuggling Cuban baseball players from the communist island to the U.S.

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MIDDLE EAST

YEMEN

***African Migrants Face Torture, Blackmail Amid Yemeni Chaos – 28 January 2017***

<http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/amid-yemens-chaos-migrants-stream-face-torment-45108329>

After reaching Yemen's shores in a packed migrant boat, the young Ethiopian coffee farmer was plunged into a living hell. The smugglers wanted thousands of dollars in ransom from the migrants, and they used him as an example of what would happen if they didn't pay.

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EUROPE

GENERAL

***Number of refugees reaching Europe plunged in 2016 – 7 January 2017***

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/number-refugees-reaching-europe-plunged-2016-170106132732972.html>

The number of refugees who arrived on Europe's shores plunged by nearly two-thirds last year, but the number of those who died on the often perilous journey in the Mediterranean Sea rose sharply, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the EU border agency Frontex has said.

***EU eyes new Libya approach to block feared migrant wave – 12 January 2017***

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya-idUSKBN14W2AA>

The European Union plans new measures to deter migrants crossing the Mediterranean from Libya, officials said, as Malta urged the bloc to act on Thursday to head off a surge in arrivals from a country where Russia is taking a new interest.

### ***Libya not accepting Italy migrant deal: EU presidency Malta – 13 January 2017***

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-libya-italy-idUSKBN14X193>

Libya's U.N.-backed government has not accepted proposals by Rome aimed at cutting migrant flows to Italy and the two sides are "far apart" on the issue, Malta's foreign minister said on Friday.

### ***Crisis warnings sound as EU gears up for new migrant wave – 15 January 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/sns-bc-eu--europe-migrants-new-crisis-20170115-story.html>

Tens of thousands of people seeking better lives are expected to trek across deserts and board unseaworthy boats in war-torn Libya this year in a desperate effort to reach European shores by way of Italy.

### ***EU leaders urged to back migrant measures for Libya – 25 January 2017***

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/d2f5e6abb4df4a2c952e547a8d2ad034>

The European Commission on Wednesday urged European leaders to endorse sweeping measures to help stop tens of thousands of desperate people from leaving Libya in search of better lives in Europe, with thousands dying during the perilous journey.

### ***EU looks to fund migrant camps in Africa to cut immigration – 26 January 2017***

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/eu-looks-to-fund-migrant-camps-in-africa-to-cut-immigration/article33771233/>

EU interior ministers on Thursday pushed ahead with plans to finance camps in Africa, where the U.N. refugee agency and aid groups would process migrants to prevent them from trying to cross the Mediterranean to Europe.

## FRANCE

### ***Farmer on Trial Defends Smuggling Migrants: 'I Am a Frenchman.' – 5 January 2017***

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/05/world/europe/cedric-herrou-migrant-smuggler-trial-france.html>

At times it was hard to know who was on trial, the smuggler or the state. The defendant, Cédric Herrou, 37, a slightly built olive farmer, did not deny that for months he had illegally spirited dozens of migrants through the remote mountain valley where he lives. He would do it again, he suggested.

## IRELAND

### ***Aer Lingus staff arrested over 'immigrant smuggling' – 23 January 2017***

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38719475>

Three men, including two Aer Lingus staff, have been arrested as part of an investigation into assisting illegal immigration through Dublin Airport.

## ITALY

### ***An overloaded boat, packed with dreams: Hundreds of migrants plucked from a hazardous journey across the Mediterranean – 6 January 2017***

<http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-migrants-boat-rescue-20170105-htmlstory.html>

As darkness fell, the rescue ship Vos Hestia sailed south of Sicily, searching for stranded migrants in the world's deadliest sea crossing.

### ***Eritrea says Italy holding wrong man in people-smuggling case – 10 January 2017***

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/10/eritrea-says-italy-holding-wrong-man-in-people-smuggling-case>

The Eritrean government has said a man being held in an Italian jail on suspicion of people smuggling is a victim of mistaken identity.

### ***Italian MP opens inquiry into mistaken identity fears in people-smuggling case – 17 January 2017***

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/17/italian-inquiry-over-mistaken-identity-fears-in-people-smuggling-case>

An Italian MP has launched a parliamentary inquiry into the joint British-Italian operation that led to a man being held on suspicion of people smuggling despite fears he is the victim of mistaken identity.

### ***Italy smashes gang that smuggled migrants into France in vans – 30 January 2017***

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-italy-idUSKBN15E1MW>

Italian police said on Monday they had smashed a criminal gang that smuggled migrants packed into vans across the border with France for up to 1,000 euros (\$1,063) each.

## LITHUANIA

### ***An unknown migrant route into EU runs through Lithuania – 10 January 2017***

<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/inpictures/2017/01/unknown-migrant-route-eu-runs-lithuania-170105093545347.html>

North of the Mediterranean and Balkan routes to Europe, some migrants and refugees have discovered an unknown route into the European Union through Lithuania's eastern borders. Despite Lithuanian border guards' efforts, criminal organisations continue to smuggle migrants from Belarus into Europe.

## SERBIA

### ***Refugee Children Face Beatings and Subzero Temperatures as They Are Pushed Back Into Serbia – 24 January 2017***

<http://time.com/4644764/refugee-children-subzero-condition-balkans/?iid=sr-link10>

Authorities in Croatia and Hungary are illegally pushing refugee and migrant children back into Serbia, often violently, Save the Children alleged Tuesday.

## SPAIN

### ***Hundreds of migrants try to storm border into Spain's enclave of Ceuta – 1 January 2017***

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-spain-idUSKBN14L147>

At least 800 sub-Saharan African migrants tried to cross into Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta from Morocco on Sunday by storming a border fence, though most were eventually turned back, the Spanish and Moroccan governments said.

### ***More than 1,000 migrants storm border at Spain's Ceuta – 2 January 2017***

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/1000-migrants-storm-border-spain-ceuta-170101181800877.html>

More than 1,000 migrants tried to jump a high double fence between Morocco and the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on Sunday in a violent assault that saw one officer lose an eye.

### ***Spain Ceuta: Migrants found hidden in car and suitcase – 2 January 2017***

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38490868>

Police have detained two Moroccans who tried to smuggle migrants into Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta - two hidden in a car and one in a suitcase.

***Woman busted smuggling teen refugee inside suitcase – 3 January 2017***

<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/01/03/europe/ceuta-morocco-refugee-suitcase/index.html>

A young woman has been caught trying to smuggle a teenage African migrant hidden in her suitcase into Spanish territory.

SWEDEN

***'Do I regret it? Not for a second': Swedish journalist goes on trial for helping refugees – 25 January 2017***

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/25/swedish-journalist-on-trial-people-smuggling-refugees-fredrik-onnevall>

Fredrik Önnvall is in court this week facing charges of people smuggling after helping 15-year-old Abed travel to Sweden.

UNITED KINGDOM

***Man who tried to smuggle child refugee into UK: 'I'd never do it again. Well ... ' – 2 January 2017***

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/02/man-who-tried-to-smuggle-child-refugee-into-uk-id-never-do-it-again-well->

A former soldier who narrowly avoided jail for trying to smuggle a child refugee into Britain has said he would attempt to get a minor to safety again if he thought he could get away with it.